



## Story Telling: Writing the Body to Recall Life in Kanehara Hitomi's *Autofiction* and Charlotte Roche's *Wrecked*

Flora Roussel

University of Montreal, Canada

### Abstract

In their way of living obsessions and traumas, the protagonists of *Autofiction* and *Wrecked* embody the conscious or unconscious search for a solution: Writing serves as the medium to tell a story as well as a means of re-entry into life. The fragmented narratives presented by Kanehara and Roche disrupt any linear storytelling as they reveal the protagonists' painful memories. Placing the body at the centre of the analysis, the argumentation focuses on the sexual and textual aspects of the body. Aiming to demonstrate how the use of storytelling in *Autofiction* and *Wrecked* symbolises a recalling to life, this article first thematises the function of sexuality and secondly looks to the narrative itself. The body thus helps a process of healing.

*Keywords:* Storytelling, Body, Writing, Identity

### Résumé

Alors qu'elles vivent d'obsessions et de traumatismes, les protagonistes d'*Autofiction* et *Wrecked* incarnent la quête – consciente ou non – d'une solution : l'écriture sert de médium pour raconter une histoire, de même qu'elle devient un moyen de revenir à la vie. Les récits fragmentés présentés par Kanehara et Roche perturbent toute narration linéaire, révélant des souvenirs douloureux. Plaçant le corps au centre de l'analyse, l'argumentation se concentre sur les aspects sexuels et textuels du corps. Dans le

but de démontrer comment l'usage de la narration dans *Autofiction* et *Wrecked* symbolise une renaissance, cet article thématise, dans un premier lieu, le rôle de la sexualité et regarde, dans un second lieu, le récit en soi. Ainsi, le corps aide à un processus de guérison.

*Mots-clés*: narration, corps, écriture, identité

## Introduction

In the last few decades, the arts have seen a 'return to narrative [...] [which] is now giving way to a re-engagement with experimental forms of storytelling'<sup>1</sup>. Proposing a review of this narrative turn, Philippe Roussin highlights the different lines of development that have enabled a new perspective on narrative, and claims that '[narrative] is now understood less as a form or an object than as a tool'<sup>2</sup>. What is important here is the 'functions of narrative' to explain 'how [...] narrative is used to construct and convey meaning'<sup>3</sup>. Because narrative reaches many other disciplines, it tends to refer only to rhetoric, rather than to poetics<sup>4</sup>. Nevertheless, it is still considered 'through the lenses of identity and meaning'<sup>5</sup>. What is thus brought into focus is the self, that is, how it defines itself or is defined by various situations, encounters, etc.

Put in a literary context, the narrative turn thus echoes characteristics of contemporary literature: the use of narratives as a tool to enable new forms of writing, playing with experimentations, and to focus on the de/re/construction of identity, underlining its plurality. Narrative, in this sense, aims to deliver a message, be it clear, be it vague. The experimental potential of narrative pertains to question of identity. Identity is here deeply related to life: on the one hand, it asserts an opposition to death through the very existence of personhood; on the other, it considers life as a force which is vital and incommensurable in excess of mere personhood. Considering this, storytelling emphasises life telling. The mix between life narratives (telling a story) and narratives of life (telling one's story) can also illustrate a multiple or fragmented self, struggling to find one way to *be*, yet different methods to prosper might exist. Autofiction appears then to be the genre *par excellence* to explore these relations between life and narrative, for it incorporates this hybrid I, as already the name of this genre tells us about a narration (-fiction) of oneself (auto-). It questions reliability and auctorial act because it navigates between autobiography and fiction, that is, between narrating oneself and writing about another self.

Two literary works can be interpreted in the light of these thoughts. *Autofiction* (2007; Japanese: *Ōtofikushon*, 2006)<sup>6</sup>, as its title already tells, is a work of autofiction

about a female writer, Lin<sup>7</sup>. With this novel, Kanehara Hitomi, presents a protagonist who is consumed by her fear of being cheated on by her husband, and who is inhabited by a violent past marked by traumatic experiences which turned Lin to a disturbed young woman. Another work of autofiction, *Wrecked* (2013; German: *Schoßgebete* [Lap Prayers], 2011)<sup>8</sup> portrays Elizabeth Kiehl, a neurotic housewife seeking for perfection, especially sexual, as a means to fight against the burden of her past. Charlotte Roche draws the portrait of a 'wrecked' woman, torn apart by a family accident that costs the life of three of her four siblings.

Obsessed and traumatised, the protagonists of *Autofiction* and *Wrecked* symbolise the conscious or unconscious search for solution: writing is then not only the medium to tell a story but becomes the way to recall life. Both Kanehara and Roche present fragmented narratives that disrupt any linear storytelling as they reveal painful memories. Yet, the novels come from two quite distinct literary traditions. *Autofiction* can be linked to the modern *shishōsetsu* [I-novel] which, as Elena Giannoulis explains, combines two principles: facticity (discursive form) and character focus (text organisation),<sup>9</sup> and proposes a new play between reality and fiction, disrupting autobiographical elements while at the same time reinserting them<sup>10</sup>. *Wrecked* follows the pattern of the *Entwicklungsroman* [novel of development], a form of *Bildungsroman* [coming-of-age story]. According to Rolf Selbmann, the *Entwicklungsroman* is oriented toward a model of self-development drawing on external influences, that is, a process of learning and growing.<sup>11</sup> Both authors play with these forms of autofiction, on which I will elaborate later.

Besides these distinctions, the novels, obviously similar in theme, have not yet elicited a comparative analysis<sup>12</sup>, apart from one newspaper article published in 2009 which makes a connection between *Autofiction* and *Wrecked* in one single sentence: 'Charlotte Roche auf japanisch [sic]<sup>13</sup> (Charlotte Roche in Japanese)<sup>14</sup>. The article tells of Kanehara's depiction of neurosis, violence, and sex/uality, but does not make the link with Roche. I thus intend to fill that gap by rethinking the disturbing aspects of these novels (crude sexuality, hysterical protagonists) and by considering bridges between literatures which can be fruitful in the re/shaping of life writing away from its universalised concept.

In a comparative perspective, I aim to analyse how the use of storytelling in both *Autofiction* and *Wrecked* symbolise a recalling to life, while placing the body at the argumentation's centre, in keeping with numerous critical understandings of the body as being sexual and textual<sup>15</sup>. The body as sexual being and as living writing does play an important role in this recalling to life. First, sexuality's function will be thematised in order to underline its necessity for the protagonists' interaction with others and with

themselves. Secondly, the analysis will turn toward the narrative itself in an attempt to demonstrate a sort of disrupting and disrupted writing that pertains to the questions of identity and meaning.

### **Body as sexual being: Between help and violence**

Sexuality in *Autofiction* and *Wrecked* serves a paradoxical strategy. Associating sex, gender identity, and intercourse, sexuality here provides help to the protagonists while at the same time threatening them with violence. This ambivalent movement between a pushing away and a holding tight can be seen through the interest for sex and the depiction of hysteria.

### **The interest in sex or in bodily proximity**

At first glance it seems that Lin and Elizabeth share a great interest for sex. When the main character of *Autofiction* affirms: 'There's nothing I like more than sex. And from the very first time I had sex, I've always placed great importance on it in my life' (A 188 / O 235), the protagonist of *Wrecked* nods: 'I grew up able to fuck the ones I wanted to fuck' (W 240 / S 237). This interest for sex does not rely only on a conventional sort of sex. Although Lin and Elizabeth reflect a certain heteronormativity – they have intercourse with men and seek for peace in marriage – they are quite sexually liberated: neither of them truly believes in monogamy, they have multiple partners and explore their own sexuality. Besides implying having casual flings, the narrator of *Autofiction* tells especially of her adventures with four men at four different ages: Shin, Shah, Gato and Kitty – how she 'does' them and also cheats on them. On the other hand, *Wrecked* focuses on the relationship between Elizabeth and her husband, Georg, a relationship that nonetheless is marked by visits to brothels, threesomes, anal and oral sex.

On closer inspection, we can see that, despite their differences, both are trying to heal past traumatic events with sex. Although sexuality is not the main topic of *Autofiction*, it lays the novel's foundation, for, as Lisette Gebhardt compellingly suggests, a certain 'phallische Matrix' (phallic matrix) structures the protagonist's psyche<sup>16</sup>. Lin thus declares having had her first sexual experience 'from behind, with [her] hands clasped on to the slide in a park' (A 188 / O 234-235), potentially inferring a rape, and has a wrecked image of relationships, owing to her belief that her parents' divorce was the result of her father's affairs (A 190, 193 / O 236-237, 240). Since then, she uses sex to get free entrance to clubs and to take revenge on boyfriends, while at the same time having company and fighting isolation. This quest for 'survival'<sup>17</sup> seems to persevere

through orgies and rapes that occur in the novel. Unlike the development portrayed in *Wrecked*, the older Lin gets, the rarer the depictions of her sexual acts become, whereas sex involving others gains more attention. For instance, nowhere in the novel is the question of her first sexual experience mentioned again, but rape scenes involving her friends increasingly appear (A 81-82, 109-110 / O 106-107, 128-129). Told backwards, the story goes from marriage/divorce to abortion.<sup>18</sup> Beginning with her husband, an editor who stays distant to her, Lin, already 22, keeps quiet about any sexuality with him. Only through the motif of amoeba, a unicellular organism, is sexuality suggested, for Lin wants to bodily merge with Shin – a fusion sexually connoted (A 58 / O 76). At the age of eighteen, Shah saved her from being gang-raped at a party at which he too was present (A 83-84 / O 108-109), yet remains particularly passive in his relation to Lin (A 101 / O 130), and finally she cheats on him (A 118 / O 150). Gato, a young man that she meets when she is sixteen, beats and sequesters Lin (A 156 / O 195), yet is deeply dependent on her (A 160 / O 200). It is during an affair with another man that she finds pleasure. The 15-year-old protagonist gets pregnant from her boyfriend Kitty who tries to take care of her (A 204 / O 252). The abortion ends their sexual proximity. We could say that each man plays the role of protector and tyrant in once: they fill a gap in Lin's life. If we could argue that Lin is responsible for her situation because she turns around 'extreme Fixierung auf [ihren] Partner' (extreme fixation on [her] partners) and an 'Wut, wenn sich der Geliebte eigene Räume bewahren will' (anger, when the lover wants to protect his own space)<sup>19</sup>, we might also, with Gebhardt, propose that Lin might not be aware of her situation<sup>20</sup>. In fact, the protagonist desperately tries to fight loneliness and isolation: 'I told myself he (Shin, her husband F.R.) was the only person in my life. And it was true. He was the only one who could understand my language' (A 9 / O 18-19). Her sexuality enables her to find a shoulder to lean on, while at the same time driving her crazy for love, for each time it is love which is given as a reason for everything. Here I see a sort of disappointment, which David Holloway already noticed in his analysis of Kanehara's other novels *Hebi ni piasu* and *Hydra*. Adapting his words, I suggest that Lin 'retreat[s] [...] to a life that is somehow normal and aligned with what is expected of Japanese women'<sup>21</sup>, namely marriage and heterosexual love. However, in willing a divorce (A 63 / O 82), the main character, affected by her past experiences, in particular sexual experiences, remains free in a way that corresponds to society (heterosexuality), yet goes against it (divorce, affair, non-motherhood). The body as a sexual being is thus not only being used by others, it uses others as well.

*Wrecked* presents a 'Hilfeschrei' (cry for help) combined with a 'Sexfixierung' (fixation on sex)<sup>22</sup>. In fact, Elizabeth too places a great importance on sex and believes that

it is the foundation of any long-term relationship: 'if things aren't working in bed anymore, it's just a question of time before the whole relationship stops working, too' (W 10 / S 14). In this regard, she mentions the lack of sexual activity with her ex-boyfriend, whom she was ready to marry, as the main reason for their breaking up, while recognising the role played by the accident, which occurred on the day before the wedding, and the subsequent cancellation of the wedding (W 164 / S 162). Whereas *Autofiction* ends with intercourse (Lin cheating on Kitty with his friend Hiro; A 216 / O 265), *Wrecked* begins with a sexual sequence, starting with the fellatio that Elizabeth performs on her husband and ending with her orgasm and his sperm trickling from her vagina (W 3-18 / S 7-22). Nevertheless, the novel soon shifts from the graphic sexuality to the very trauma Elizabeth has had since the car accident during which she lost three of her four siblings and her mother got severely burned. It goes from almost asceticism to hypersexuality. The novel navigates between descriptions of sex and flashbacks of the past. It brings Nina Schmidt to rightly state that sex functions 'almost as a kind of tranquilizer', as '[a] temporary relief'<sup>23</sup>. Yet it succeeds in being a way for Elizabeth to overcome her fears: '[...] the only time I'm free of fear is when I displace it with hypersexuality' (W 106 / S 107-108). Having cheated on her past boyfriends, she finds herself without intimacy, and the consequences of the accident (she has to take care of her mother) interfere with her ability to look for it. The one and only time she had sex with her ex-boyfriend got her pregnant (W 192 / S 189). According to Petra Volkhausen, this leads to the search for a living out of the trauma through her daughter, Liza, who becomes a sort of replacement for her dead brothers.<sup>24</sup> If the pregnancy can become a reason to keep on living, it also puts sex in the centre of this sort of resurrection. So Elizabeth screams: '*Fuck me back to life!*' (W 192; italics by the translator / S 189). Further, her striving for sexual performance is less a way to please and thank her husband, as if she were 'under the impression that she owes him – Georg took care of the debts she and her former boyfriend had amassed'<sup>25</sup>; rather, Elizabeth regains her sexuality back step by step with him, while discovering her will, displacing the focus from Georg's sexuality to hers: 'The only thing I ever wish for is to be with another man. [...] I won't be able to stand being with just one for much longer' (W 281 / S 275). Her wish for more sexual freedom reflects her need to be freed from her past, sexuality serving as 'die beste, wenn nicht die einzige Überwindung des Todes' (the best, if not the sole, overcoming of death)<sup>26</sup>. To put it in other words, this sex dis-/recovering exorcises her trauma.

Therefore, this bodily proximity in *Autofiction* and *Wrecked* provides help, and seems to be a strategy for Lin to overcome loneliness and fulfil her need for love, and for Elizabeth to break through the neurosis resulting from the accident and fulfil her



need for freedom. However, this method also uncovers a brutal past. Kanehara describes how Lin's relationships are marked by violence<sup>27</sup> and Roche goes on linking the accident with Elizabeth's sexual life. On the one hand, the sexual violence in *Autofiction* contrasts with the psychic violence in *Wrecked*; on the other, the psychic abruptness of *Autofiction* stands in opposition to the sexual abruptness of *Wrecked*. Gang-rape and a mood of extreme instability are part of Lin's story. In Elizabeth's, we are confronted with children burned in an accident and the extreme indecision concerning sex described by the protagonist. In both cases, it may be seen that Lin and Elizabeth seek for a bodily proximity, as sex would be the only possible interaction with others, and that they embody a sense of being uncontrollable.

### The depiction of hysteria or a paradoxical strategy

Violence can be found not only in the protagonists' interactions with others, but also within themselves. *Autofiction* and *Wrecked* portray two young women through the lens of madness, in particular hysteria that acts here in concert with sexuality. Both novels make use of hysteria in a paradoxical way: the protagonists' bodies serve to communicate feelings and wishes to others and to play with stereotypes about women. Lin has tantrum moments and Elizabeth explains how she can become paranoid. *Autofiction* and *Wrecked* exemplify bodily and sexually the clichéd idea of hysterical women by showing their need for sex and love, and by depicting mood swings.

In *Autofiction*, hysteria helps Lin to get out of '[her] lonely island' (A 118 / O 150). Whereas the madness depicted in Roche's novel is quite physically dangerous, Kanehara's text chooses verbal aggressions. In the first chapter, daydreaming about her husband having sex with the stewardess on their way back from their honeymoon (A 8-13 / O 17-22), the main character reveals herself as aggressive. Later, jealous or – more accurately – afraid of being alone, Lin cannot accept the need of Shin to step back in his room, where he keeps secrets hidden in a closed trunk (A 15, 39 / O 25, 54). Enoki Masaki compellingly suggests that the protagonist, who is in a need for control, focuses her obsession on this single object in order to be able to survive reality.<sup>28</sup> Insulting her husband and making death threats against him, she is letting her 'pussy' talk (A 16 / O 26). Lin herself describes hysteria as follows: 'The desire to be wanted by a man. The desire to get a man. Most females go into hysterics if either of these can't be fulfilled or the fulfilment of these two desires is unbalanced. Their pussies get all irritable, restless. What is hysteria, after all? It's a disease of the pussy' (A 16 / O 25-26). The depiction of hysteria is interesting, for it highlights how the protagonist's biological sex, her gender identity as well as her personality merge to become a 'pussy', that

is, it is reduced to a pure animal instinct. An instinct for survival against her traumatic past of loneliness, brutal experiences and a nomadic life. The biological aspect of her neurosis comes up often in the book as, for instance, in chapter 2, during which Lin and her vagina talk aggressively to each other while Lin is cheating on her boyfriend with a common friend, Kazu (A 118-121 / O 150-155). Here, sex becomes a brutish act to thwart her loneliness: 'I have to in order to survive. It can't be helped. It's necessary for Shah and me to continue in our relationship. Because I'll die if I don't do this. If I stay this way I'll die of loneliness' (A 121 / O 154). We should note that these measures taken by the protagonist in order to be with someone can be seen as a response to how men treat her, so that, following Gebhardt, hysteria could be a strategy to survive in a man's world<sup>29</sup>. Therefore, what appears as purely cliché (the so-called hysterical woman), is ironically twisted: in the eyes of Lin, hysteria, that is, female genitals, is a strategy to advocate for herself.

*Wrecked* shows similar characteristics, yet draws a different conclusion. Elizabeth describes herself as being aggressive not only towards her husband, but also towards her step-son, Max (W 222-223 / S 219-220), which leads the couple to have therapy. During a flashback, the narrator explains how, while she was 'just' psychologically mishandling Max, she did become physical with Georg: 'I think it must be quite impressive when I throw a fit. I've poured boiling milk on him, lifted a one-hundred-kilo table and tried to throw it at him. I've thrown everything at him and inflicted pain on him' (W 208 / S 205). Here, sexuality or sex itself is not linked to Elizabeth's neurosis. Yet, because the protagonist chose Georg as a husband for his strength, especially sexual (W 211 / S 209), hysteria still holds on the stereotype through him who was – and perhaps still is – the scapegoat of the protagonist, trying to not feel pain and fear by feeling hate for a loved one: 'I was better off before the marriage counselling, because I could just passive-aggressively try to make him responsible for everything. [...] I didn't want to allow myself to feel any grief, which is why I became so aggressive' (W 102 / S 104). Also, out of the fear of losing someone else she loves, the protagonist attempts to exert a high degree of control of her surroundings (W 108 / S 109). In this regard, and in a flashback, she tells how she had set a trap for her husband so as to determine if, in her absence, he would watch the porn DVDs they had rented together. When it turned out he did, Elizabeth could not control her anger, insulting him for days (W 208-214 / S 205-212). Unlike *Autofiction*, *Wrecked* does not focus on the female genitalia to symbolise hysteria, but on the protagonist's mood swings and on male genitalia. Because Georg appears so strong, so full of testosterone (W 193 / S 191), she explodes at him. Contrary to Volkhausen's interpretation that *Wrecked* merely hyper-



bolises female hysteria<sup>30</sup>, I argue that the novel draws attention to the process of healing. Thus, while flashbacks tend to illustrate Elizabeth's physical and verbal aggressiveness towards her husband in particular, the present insists on her trying to control herself by keeping her insults as thoughts (W 102 / S 103-104). For instance, she gets pinworms and wants that Georg looks at them, which he refuses on the basis of loss of sexual attraction and appetite afterwards (W 100-101 / S 102). What becomes the object of derision here is Georg's sexuality, not that of the protagonist.

To conclude, the body as a sexual being navigates between help and violence as is seen in the interest for sex and the depiction of hysteria. Given that *Autofiction* and *Wrecked* present stereotypes of gender and sex, we might assume that they follow a non-feminist agenda: they describe hysterical women, present heteronormativity and portray marriage as the ideal goal. To come to such a conclusion, however, would be to reduce the potential of these novels. Indeed, *Wrecked* can be interpreted as pop-feminist, a current particular to Germany, which reorients concerns of the second-wave of feminism to a society marked by pop culture and in need of new assertions,<sup>31</sup> and *Autofiction* carries the traits of a postfeminist novel which tends to 'a shift from objectification to subjectification' as well as a "resexualization" of women's bodies'.<sup>32</sup> Considering that pop-feminism and post-feminism are, however, paradoxical ways to assert gender identity and sexuality because they convey as much the necessity of feminism as its irrelevance<sup>33</sup>, we can then argue that both novels give us such an ambiguous account. While the authors might not have wanted to reduce feelings of depression and loneliness as, interlaced with sex and sexuality, they are at the core of their narratives, they nevertheless exaggerate such depictions to ironically reverse the image of the so-called hysterical women as well as to insist on the difficulty of deconstructing stereotypes. Sexuality, seen through the lens of gender and sex representations, is a paradoxical strategy, helpful and violent: a narrative of resistance which looks for a narrative of the self.

### **Body as living writing: Search for identity and meaning**

Both *Autofiction* and *Wrecked* explore a search for identity and meaning through writing. Less than a *Entwicklungsroman*, more than a modern *shishōsetsu*, Roche's and Kanehara's novels tell life. The text acts as a body that gives the protagonists the potential to literary and literally experiment life, that is, to fight against the death, to overcome past traumatic events. The omnipresence of the past supports the idea that death has an important role in the novels. And it is through experimental writing that Lin and Elizabeth seem to find peace.

## The role of death or a bright darkness

In further developing Cathy Caruth's theory of trauma, Nina Schmidt lists the 'central characteristics of trauma', which are: an overwhelming event, a passive and repetitive response to such an event and the unspeakable aspect of the trauma that she analyses in contemporary German and British literature.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, Yo Yahata describes a 'dark subculture' in Japanese literature written by young authors, which leads him to talk of 'a kind of masochism' based on 'self-abuse' used as a way 'to establish intimacy' with others neo-masochists who live outside of the conformist society that is often too quick to criticise.<sup>35</sup> In combining these two positions,<sup>35</sup> and building a bridge between German and Japanese literature, I argue that the repetitiveness and the overwhelming nature of traumatic experiences foil expectations about life: the protagonists develop their own strategy to survive and part of this is to accept and live with death.

Hence, a certain darkness accompanies the novels in which the preponderance of death contrasts with a cry for life. The topics of *Autofiction* and *Wrecked* are charged with this darkness: the former concentrates on rape, abandonment, violence, wrist cuttings, hallucinations of severed heads, death thoughts; the latter focuses on accident, death of family members, notary visits, paranoia, suicidal thoughts. More grey than pitch black or bright white, Kanehara's and Roche's novels give death the task of creating life. And the authors do so in experimenting with what is often considered as secondary to the main subject of the novels: title and text structure. Indeed, they offer a playful construct that renders this bright darkness, so as to further insist on the deconstruction of linear life narratives about the self.

Besides being the name of a literary genre to which I will later turn, *Autofiction* could be interpreted as a fiction above the self, thereby denying the self, for it narrates while at the same time referring to a way to re/write the self. Talking to her editor, Shinagawa, about a future novel that would be an autofiction and hallucinating that he might kill her, Lin reveals this closeness between death and life: 'He (Shinagawa F.R.) is bound to spear me the moment I try to get away. What a game of survival of life is. Every day I come face to face with death like this. The words "*memento mori*" come to mind and I want to sing them out loud' (A 56 / O 74). The text as a body is bound to death and life. The fiction of the self relates to the *fictionality* of and the *reality* of oneself, and the balance between those two foils death. Thus, the wilfulness of telling enables to put light in the darkness and points to the vanity of life: life, being vain as it has to end, goes here in harmony and by hand with death. The structure of the novel follows this path. Told backwards, the present becomes the past, as the story tells of a '22nd winter', an '18th summer', a '16th summer' and a '15th winter'. As Gebhardt suggests,

these ruptures play with reality.<sup>36</sup> Although each of the four chapters keeps a chronological storyline, Giannoulis shows that the chapters' times give increasing space to the past (four years difference between chapters 1 and 2, then two years between chapters 2 and 3, finally about six months or one year between chapters 3 and 4)<sup>37</sup>. I further contend that their temporal chiasmus (winter-summer-summer-winter) insists on a sort of repetitiveness and a disrupted chronology through which the past gains an overwhelming presence. In fact, the division in four chapters does refer to a sense of reality, that is, a sense of present time; for Enoki, they seem to exist on the same level and simultaneously<sup>38</sup>. The past, charged by traumatic experiences, such as quasi-rapes and constant abandonments, becomes overwhelming. Nevertheless, this title and structure, through which death seems to prevail, underline an acceptance: to tell about traumatic experiences is to live with the darkness. In this sense, the last chapter closes with the following words: 'Now, as I lean on the window ledge, I think, *I won't die, I definitely won't die, I won't die for the rest of my life. I'm deathless. The severed head won't fall and I can no longer even imagine that I would die. I'll make a change in myself, by myself. I know now that I can*' (A 216; italics by the translator / O 265). The literary choices of the author also give a playful note to the novel: the frequent repetition of words, negation, and ability as well as the preponderant use of the future tense and verbs for capacity put a touch of brightness in the sense of pointlessness of life recalled in the Latin locution meaning 'Remember that you will die'. Death is thus part of life and it constructs life. To ignore it would be vain and that is what *Autofiction* seems to recall. The past might become both present and future, insisting again on the repetitive and overwhelming aspects of trauma.

As for *Wrecked*, the German title of Roche's novel, *Schoßgebete* [Lap Prayers], is a neologism which links the book's sexual and religious aspects, immediately reminding us of sex and text. Schmidt explains that the 'dark-humored pun on the German noun *Stoßgebet* – a quick, short, last-minute prayer uttered in a situation of sudden danger' is associated with 'the female body and sexuality'<sup>39</sup>. As shown above, the role of sex as a healer, as a way out of trauma, mirrors the role of death in Elizabeth's life, which thus turns a life narrative into a 'trauma narrative'<sup>40</sup>. While the religious reference recalls Kanehara's *memento mori* because of the link to Christianity, it possesses a confessional power in *Wrecked*, which is highlighted in the structure of the novel. What Schmidt describes as the 'minutely detailed protocol of Elizabeth's everyday life and thoughts' that is 'aligned with serious insights into the narrator's psyche',<sup>41</sup> echoes a confessional mode of telling, also revealed by the diary structure of the novel. Moreover, using flashbacks to tell the past, Roche lets her protagonist move back and forth

between trauma and healing, as she wanted to give Elizabeth the possibility of confiding to the readers her many phobias and paranoia linked to the accident. For Volkhausen, the novel's structure enables a real confession: the main character does go to therapy and the three sessions with Frau Drescher, her psychoanalyst, that are described and/or evoked, insist on this confession, which brings some light in the darkness in Elizabeth's life<sup>42</sup>: 'For eight years now, I've gone to see her (Frau Drescher F.R.) three times a week. Without her I wouldn't be alive anymore. I've wanted to kill myself twenty times during those eight years' (W 171 / S 169). Interestingly, the importance and routine of the therapy respond to the overwhelming and repetitive aspects of the trauma. The content of the sessions resonates with these aspects<sup>43</sup>: for instance, the protagonist tells the same stories over and over, and her need to constantly adapt her testament to which Frau Drescher answers: 'I know, Frau Kiehl, I know' (W 185 / S 183). Although the chapters, as in *Autofiction*, are chronological (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday), the flashbacks also gain in space throughout the novel. Therefore, not only does the past somehow overwhelm the present, it also repeats itself. In fact, the main character reveals bit by bit the traumatic event of her life, that is, the accident, the death of her three brothers, the brutal wounds of her mother, the cancellation of her wedding, and all the other consequences. Yet, because the flashbacks multiply, and Elizabeth always comes back to the accident, a sense of repetitiveness appears, which the confessional mode of the novel underlines. In a different way from *Autofiction*, the past in *Wrecked* becomes present too, indeed overwhelming it. That is accentuated by the use of the present tense for both the flashbacks and Elizabeth's day-to-day life. This use of the present tense brings Schmidt to rightly conclude that no distinction is made between the two time frames<sup>44</sup>. That the novel ends with the possibility for the main character to have sex with another man with her husband's consent (W 289 / S 283), shows some light in the darkness, as the actual present turns towards a future of freedom.

In both novels, death plays a tremendous role, not only in the content, but also in the form. They use some characteristics common to trauma narratives to be able to tell of the unspeakable: the darkness of their lives, their depression. Nevertheless, it is not without a hope of peace that Kanehara and Roche develop their texts. While Lin and Elizabeth find ways through the body as sexual being to overcome their loneliness and neurosis, they make use of the body as a living writing as well. The repetitive and overwhelming aspects of the past do not prevent life from prospering. In their experimenting, the 'I's' of the novels are writing and this gives hope for a brighter darkness.

## The experimental writing or a fragmentation of identity

*Autofiction* and *Wrecked* are autofictions which allow a questioning of the very identity and meaning of the protagonists, as well as of their link to the authors. In fact, Per Krogh Hansen describes autofiction as 'a genre parallel to or a sub-genre of autobiography', a genre that pertains to the potential unreliability of narration in regard to the authorial act<sup>45</sup>. We can thus ask how far a narrator is un/reliable, how far the author plays on this un/reliability, how distant are truth and fiction from each other, how distant are author, narrator, and protagonist from being one. Coined by Serge Doubrovsky on the back cover of *Fils* (1977) and in response to Pierre Lejeune's concept of autobiography, the term autofiction refers to a homonymy between author-narrator-protagonist and a hybridity that tends to neurosis, amongst other characteristics.<sup>46</sup> In the Japanese context, Giannoulis explains that autofictions are to be found in the modern *shishōsetsu*, which is no longer the authors' apparent autobiographical stories and which now playfully thematises fiction and identity, disrupting any sense of reality.<sup>47</sup> The obvious similarity in Kanehara's and Lin's surname<sup>48</sup> and in their nomadic life<sup>49</sup> etc. is often used by the media and what Rachel DiNitto considers 'as an interpretative means to (Kanehara's F.R.) novel'<sup>50</sup>. In *Wrecked*, Roche plays with autobiographical elements that Birgitta Krumrey summarises as such: the accident, the age and background of Elizabeth, who nonetheless has a different name and profession from that of Roche.<sup>51</sup> However, this blurring 'between author, narrator and character as well as between fact and fiction'<sup>52</sup> helps to experiment with writing. The body as text here opens up the possibility for the protagonists to play with genres and categories, and so to illustrate how life can be messy but still allow for a potential healing.

Aligned with the genre of autofiction, the unreliability of narration infers a fragmentation of identity: author, narrator, protagonist are different and similar at the same time. It is rather the plurality of I's that is given priority. Kanehara explains in an interview that she wanted to experiment and thus wrote a metafiction<sup>53</sup>: Lin herself is a writer whose stories of the past come back in the narrative time frame. For instance, the episode of her trip back to Japan after her honeymoon with her husband is a piece of work that her editor finds remarkable (A 48 / O 64). Therefore, what is narratively told becomes a narrative in the narrative. Giannoulis compellingly suggests that *Autofiction's* narrative provides an example of metafiction with at least three levels: the first embedded narrative part, the second embedded narrative part which reflects the first one, and the framing narrative part that responds to the two embedded narrative parts.<sup>54</sup> The latter relies on Kanehara, while the two former lean on her protagonist.<sup>55</sup> The embedding of stories, already visible in the chapters' division, echoes Lin's task to



write an autofiction (A 49 / O 65). Through this blurring of author, narrator, and protagonist, we might question the I, as the 22-year-old Lin states: 'I'm an *artificial* woman myself. I eat *artificiality*, I grew up on *artificiality*, I play with *artificiality*, I excrete *artificiality* and I even live in an *artificial* world' (A 55 / O 73; my emphasis). In that sense too, the secondary characters appear strangely similar: not only does Lin's editor *Shinagawa* recall her husband, Shin, an editor himself, but the protagonist insists on merging with him: 'As I hold Shin tight and try to get as close to him as possible, I feel like an amoeba. Through holding on to him, I'm holding myself together and stopping myself from just melting away' (A 58 / O 76). The amoeba, a unicellular organism, can move and multiply by developing an endless number of new feet, a phenomenon called *pseudopodia*.<sup>56</sup> Besides having a sexual connotation, this motif echoes the act of experimental writing that blurs identity through fragmenting it, and mirrors the stream-of-consciousness-style that, as Giannoulis explains, plays with monologues, dialogues, irregular sentence structures<sup>57</sup>. These two aspects of experimental writing and fragmented identity are to be found in the depiction of the three other men Lin talks about: they are linked to the semantic field of cat, recalling the sensuality of some of Baudelaire's poems in *The Flowers of Evil*<sup>58</sup> and a certain anonymity found in Natsume Sōseki's *I Am a Cat*. While *Shah/シャア* was inspired by the French word for cat (*chat*) and *Gato/ガトウ* comes from Italian (*gatto*), *Kitty* is the English translation of *にゃんこ* (*nyanko*), both being little words for cat.<sup>59</sup> Enoki brilliantly suggests that this animalistic semantic field leaves the impression that these men are pets to the protagonist and, at the same time, that they are similar in appearance, although the different naming tries to imply the contrary.<sup>60</sup> The resulting artificiality in all the characters reveals both a blurring and a fragmentation of identity. The taste for anonymity stands for a plurality of 'I's' as a writing experiment. Through the invention of characters, similar yet distinct, Lin tries to put her identity's pieces back together. The body, through the fluidity of its identity, itself becomes a text – a living and embodied writing.

Although Elizabeth is a photographer, not a writer, the confessional mode she uses to describe her sexual and psychic evolution allows the text as well to be considered as a living writing. To this regard, Emily Spiers proposes to interpret the colloquial tone of the text as a sign of a directness, providing an effect of immediacy.<sup>61</sup> I would like to also propose that the protagonist's work, that is, the taking of a picture of one moment in one place and one time, corresponds to the mode of revealing the trauma through flashbacks. This continuity, moreover, points to a certain experience of writing that strangely fixates on the number three. Three dead brothers (Harry, Lukas, Paul; W 104 / S 105), three women negatively depicted (Elizabeth's mother, the famous German feminist Alice Schwarzer, Elizabeth's best friend: Catherine), a three-person



family (Elizabeth, Georg, Liza), three chapters (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday), three psychoanalytical sessions (W 43-52, 171-187, 257-268 / S 46-55; 169-185; 251-262). Beyond the possible link to the Christian Trinity, the novel could hold a three-act-structure: the exposition, the confrontation, the climax. The immediacy and the number three frame a sort of fragmentation. However, as in *Autofiction*, the style of stream-of-consciousness avoids a clear separation: *Wrecked* tells Elizabeth's thoughts, punctuated by dialogues and descriptions of her everyday life, and moves back and forth between past and present, between sex and trauma, not taking into account the chapters' division. The paradox here enables a living writing, for life cannot be strictly regulated. Furthermore, the immediacy and the stream-of-consciousness point to a blurring of the narrated 'I' and the narrating 'I'. The picture shows a narrated 'I' that could not be seen, however, without the narrating 'I'. In the same way, the thoughts of Elizabeth present a narrating 'I' that navigates through different narrated 'I's'. Because her life is in pieces, her identity appears fragmented: 'It's exhausting after a while – keeping one foot in life and one in the grave, always straddling the divide, unable to decide for one or the other' (W 285 / S 279). Recalling the unreliability of narration with regard to the authorial act, echoed in the trauma narrative, I suggest that Roche questions identity and illustrates a sense of non-belonging. Her protagonist, torn apart by a past traumatic event, stands in conflict with the present as well. Through the body as sexual being and living writing, Elizabeth holds herself together.

Hence, the body as living writing reveals itself through the role of death and the experimental aspect of the novels. Both *Autofiction* and *Wrecked* propose life narratives and narratives of life that are metaphorical of the self, dismantling the idea of a *stable* identity. They are both giving an account of life struggles, of which fictionality and reality constantly overlap. Telling of traumatic experiences and emotions, they appear as resistance narratives, recounted to recall the pain in order to overcome it. The genre of autofiction helps the protagonists to put together pieces of themselves. The fragmentation of identity echoes the experimental writing. The focus is not on the possible negative side of a self – disturbed, perturbed – but on the potentially positive aspect of an 'I', searching for itself, somehow accepting its plurality. 'Frau Drescher has taught me that trauma is so painful because it's like an open wound that won't close and heal' (W 114 / S 115), explains Elizabeth, whereas Lin writes, after demanding a divorce from her husband: 'Now I sit in the silence of the room. My fingers and nails striking the keyboard make the only sound' (A 63 / O 83). Writing thus becomes for the protagonists a way to find peace, and, because they appear – multiple, fragmented – through the act of writing, they regain a power over life.

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## Conclusion: Recalling life or recalling to life

For Roussin, narrative as a tool leads to a concept with 'diverse applications and [...] uses'.<sup>62</sup> In the heterogeneity of the narrative turn, it is possible to build bridges between disciplines as well as between literatures, especially by new forms of storytelling which experiment with notions of identity and meaning that point to the plurality of self in its distortion, in its fragmentation. If the body can help to draw the material contours of a self, the self is not, however, stable. The self is not unified or structured, but diverse or wide and that point illustrates the meaning behind the narrative turn acknowledged by Roussin. We could even argue that the body itself cannot hold in its material contours. In fact, the body mirrors a fragmentation of the self in presenting us with paradoxical strategies. *Autofiction* and *Wrecked* provide a good example of it: they both use the storytelling to symbolise a recalling to life, and place the body at the centre of their content and form. Therefore, they suggest that the body is to be understood as a living being *and* as a living writing. Kanehara and Roche inject their novels with a *palpable* experience of life. They depict two women, both burdened by a traumatic past. These women develop two tactics to heal their pain: the body of each thus becomes a sexual being and a living writing. In fact, sexuality is at the same time violence and helpfulness, while the experiment with and experience of writing illustrates a search for identity and meaning.

Although they are discovering – or perhaps rediscovering themselves – Lin and Elizabeth are nevertheless not healed at the end of the novels, yet they do see the light at the end of the tunnel of depression. While *Autofiction* closes with a breakup and an urge for life, *Wrecked* finishes with a hard talk about death and a recognition of sexual freedom. Perhaps, the hope that lights up the end of both novels reveals how their authors coped with such trauma and built a career. In making use of autofiction in an experimental way, they offer life narratives, that is, examples of fragmented selves, as well as narratives of life, which echo their own struggles.

Further and paradoxically, the texts show different sides of the body's narrative. Kanehara's novel portrays, as Matt Thorne proposes, an 'anatomisation of a disturbed mind', a 'destructive mental process'<sup>63</sup>, and Roche's produces, for Schmidt, a 'symptomatology of [...] trauma of bereavement'<sup>64</sup>. There is no separation between mind and body. The body here assumes various shapes: psyche, sex/uality, text. Although Roussin would warn us that '[b]eing everywhere, [the narrative turn] runs the risk of being nowhere'<sup>65</sup>, the novels seem to contradict this point for they embrace contrasts and

nourish themselves from paradoxes. The body does not disappear – it becomes multiple through storytelling. Recalling life, both protagonists follow a process of healing. Recalling to life, they blossom, however twisted and disturbed.

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### About the author

After having studied French, German and Japanese literatures, cultures, and languages, Flora Roussel is currently a Ph.D. Candidate and Lecturer in Comparative and General Literature at the University of Montreal (Canada). She works on questions of performativity and affect from a feminist, decolonial, and queer perspective. She is interested in the relationships among sexuality, subjectivity, identity, and bodies, in particular in four contemporary authors: Akwaeke Emezi, Wendy Delorme, Charlotte Roche, and Kanehara Hitomi. She has participated to various conferences around the world and has published her research both in Canada and abroad (*Post-Scriptum, Humanities Bulletin, Études Littéraires Africaines*).

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Roussin, Philippe, 'What is Your Narrative? Lessons from the Narrative Turn', in: Hansen, Per Krogh et al. (eds.), *Emerging Vectors of Narratology*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2017, 383-404, 383.

<sup>2</sup> Idem, 385.

<sup>3</sup> Idem.

<sup>4</sup> Idem, 401.

<sup>5</sup> Idem.

<sup>6</sup> References to Kanehara's novel will be in brackets, the English translation preceding the Japanese original and therefore indicated as follows: A 12 / O 10.

<sup>7</sup> David James Karashima kept the transliteration of the Japanese name 'Rin / リン' for its translation into English (Kanehara 2007). In order to be closer to the actual pronunciation of this name, I chose 'Lin' as translation.

<sup>8</sup> References to Roche's novel will be in brackets, the English translation preceding the German original and therefore indicated as follows: W 40 / S 36.

<sup>9</sup> Giannoulis, Elena, *Blut als Tinte. Wirkungs- und Funktionsmechanismen zeitgenössischer shishōsetsu*, Munich: Iudicium Verlag, Iaponia Insula Reihe, 2010, 83.

<sup>10</sup> Idem, 161-162.

<sup>11</sup> Selbmann, Rolf, *Der deutsche Bildungsroman*, Stuttgart, Weimar: Verlag J. B. Metzler, 1994, 2nd edition, 30-31.

<sup>12</sup> I compared elsewhere Charlotte Roche's debut novel, *Feuchtgebiete* (2008), and Kanehara Hitomi's first novel, *Hebi ni piasu* (2003), and how they play with the concept of beauty in a paradoxical way. See Roussel, Flora, 'Ugly Bodies: The Beauty of Ambivalent Distortions in Kanehara Hitomi's *Hebi ni piasu* and Charlotte Roche's *Feuchtgebiete*', in: *Post-Scriptum* 29 (December 2020) online, <https://post-scriptum.org/29-09-ugly-bodies-the-beauty-of-ambivalent-distortions-in-kanehara-hitomis-hebi-ni-piasu-and-charlotte-roches-feuchtgebiete/>. Date accessed: 26 September 2020.

<sup>13</sup> Anonym, 'Charlotte Roche auf japanisch', in: *Berliner Zeitung Online*, 19 January 2009; <http://www.bz-berlin.de/artikel-archiv/charlotte-roche-auf-japanisch>. Date accessed: 21 August 2019.

<sup>14</sup> All translations in brackets are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>15</sup> We could cite Hélène Cixous's *Le Rire de la Méduse*, in which the author coined the noun 'sexe' from the combination of the French words *sexe* and *texte* (2010 [1975], 54). Cixous calls for an *écriture féminine*, that is, a writing through which women can regain their bodies: sexually and textually speaking, for it is about the recognition of women in the society (Idem, 37).

<sup>16</sup> Gebhardt, Lisette, 'Kanehara Hitomi: Manierismen der Verweigerung', in: *Asiatische Studien: Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen Asiengesellschaft = Etudes asiatiques: revue de la Société Suisse – Asie*, 61:2 (2007) 685-695, 692.

<sup>17</sup> Holloway, David, 'Gender, Body, and Disappointment in Kanehara Hitomi's Fiction', in: *Japanese Language and Literature*, 50:1 (2016) 75-103, 77. Holloway describes this question of survival as a main topic in Kanehara's novels, especially the two he analysed: *Snakes and Earrings* and *Hydra*. Nevertheless, I argue this motif is consistently present in the author's other first novels, including *Autofiction*.

<sup>18</sup> Gebhardt, Lisette, 2007, 692.

<sup>19</sup> Idem, 693.

<sup>20</sup> Idem, 692-693.

<sup>21</sup> Holloway, David, 2016, 76.

<sup>22</sup> Mangold, Ijoma, 'Charlotte Roches 'Schoßgebete'. Alles für die Kinder', in: *Zeit Online*, 33, 11 August 2011; <https://www.zeit.de/2011/33/L-Roche-Schossgebete>. Date accessed: 26 February 2019.

<sup>23</sup> Schmidt, Nina, *The wounded self: writing illness in twenty-first-century German literature*, Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2018, 49.

<sup>24</sup> Volkhausen, Petra, 'Female Madness in the Age of Neo-Liberalism in Charlotte Roche's Novels *Wetlands* and *Wrecked*', in: *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies*, 53:1 (2017) 68-84, 76.

<sup>25</sup> Idem, 77.

<sup>26</sup> Steinfeld, Thomas, 'Charlotte Roches neuer Roman "Schoßgebete". Verlogenheit zwischen den Beinen', in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 22 July 2012; <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/charlotte-roches-neuer-roman-schossgebete-verlogenheit-zwischen-den-beinen-1.1129744>. Date accessed: 26 February 2019.

<sup>27</sup> Giannoulis, Elena, 2010, 163.

<sup>28</sup> Enoki, Masaki and Hitomi Kanehara, "'Genzai" joseibungaku e no manazashi 10: Kanehara Hitomi', in: *Subaru* 6 (2008) 234-249, 246.

<sup>29</sup> Gebhardt, Lisette, 2007, 694.

<sup>30</sup> Volkhausen, Petra, 2017, 68-69.



<sup>31</sup> Eismann, Sonja (ed.), *Hot Topic. Popfeminismus heute*, Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2011 [2007], 10-11. Authors and journalists like Thea Dorn, Mirja Stöcker, Sonja Eismann, Jana Hensel, Elisabeth Raether, etc. drive this movement of popfeminism. Mostly, they tried to overcome the strong presence of second-wave feminism (70s) in Germany embodied by Alice Schwarzer by proposing a new or renewed image of feminism, that is, fun, positive, assertive, individualistic, performative (McCarthy, Margaret, *Mad Mädchen: feminism and generational conflict in recent German literature and film*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2017, 44-53).

<sup>32</sup> Gill, Rosalind, Scharff, Christina, 'Introduction', in: Gill, Rosalind and Christina Scharff (eds.), *New Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism and Subjectivity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 1-11, 4. Gill and Scharff state that postfeminism, because of its neoliberal aura (in its economic and socio-philosophical sense), puts 'femininity [...] as a bodily property' that underlines 'an emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring and discipline' and focuses 'upon individualism, choice and empowerment' (Idem). Paradoxically, postfeminism advocates for '[an] active, freely choosing, self-reinventing subject' that yet responds to societal demands of performance and individualisation (Idem).

<sup>33</sup> McRobbie, Angela, *The Aftermath of Feminism*, London: Sage, 2009, 6, 17-18. Angela McRobbie condemns the marketing of feminism, which has infected conceptions of sexuality and gender, and which relegates political and social achievements and further goals to the background. She considers this mainstream feminism as a feminism that backlashes itself (Idem, 13).

<sup>34</sup> Schmidt, Nina, 2018, 44-45.

<sup>35</sup> Yo, Yahata, 'The Dark Subculture of Japanese Youth', in: *World Press Review*, 51:4, April 2004; <http://www.worldpress.org/Asia/1841.cfm>. Date accessed: 03 May 2018.

<sup>36</sup> Gebhardt, Lisette, 2007, 692.

<sup>37</sup> Giannoulis, Elena, 2010, 164.

<sup>38</sup> Enoki, Masaki and Hitomi Kanehara, 2008, 244.

<sup>39</sup> Schmidt, Nina, 2018, 44.

<sup>40</sup> Idem.

<sup>41</sup> Idem, 48.

<sup>42</sup> Volkhausen, Petra, 2017, 79.

<sup>43</sup> Smith-Prei, Carrie and Maria Stehle, 'The Awkward Politics of Popfeminist Literary Events: Helene Hegemann, Charlotte Roche, and Lady Bitch Ray', in: Baer, Hester and Alexandra Merley Hill (eds.), *German Women's Writing in the Twenty-First Century*. Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2015, 132-153, 144.

<sup>44</sup> Schmidt, Nina, 2018, 60.

<sup>45</sup> Hansen, Per Krogh, 'Autofiction and Authorial Unreliable Narration', in: Hansen, Per Krogh et al. (eds.), *Emerging Vectors of Narratology*, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2017, 47-59, 47.

<sup>46</sup> Doubrovsky, Serge, 'Autobiographie/vérité/psychanalyse', in: Serge Doubrovsky (ed.), *Autobiographies: de Corneille à Sartre*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1988, 61-79, 69-70.

<sup>47</sup> Giannoulis, Elena, 2010, 181-183.

<sup>48</sup> The protagonist is called Takahara/高原 (A 17 / O 27), which has a pronunciation and spelling close to Kanehara/金原.

<sup>49</sup> Kanehara left school at an early age, went on living outside her parents' house, cut herself, played pachinko (DiNitto 2011: 459). Lin wanders from house to house since her 16, plays pachinko, cuts her wrists, has a life in underground Tokyo (A 133, 140-141 / O 170, 179-180).

<sup>50</sup> DiNitto, Rachel, 'Between literature and subculture: Kanehara Hitomi, media commodification and the desire for agency in post-bubble Japan', in: *Japan Forum* 23:4 (2011) 453-470, 459.

<sup>51</sup> Krumrey, Birgitta, 'Autorschaft in der fiktionalen Autobiographie der Gegenwart: Ein Spiel mit der Leserschaft. Charlotte Roches Feuchtgebiete und Klaus Modicks Bestseller', in: Schaffrick, Matthias and Marcus Willand (eds.), *Theorien und Praktiken der Autorschaft*, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2014, 541-562, 552-553.

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<sup>52</sup> Hansen, Per Krogh, 2017, 57.

<sup>53</sup> Enoki, Masaki and Hitomi Kanehara, 2008, 245.

<sup>54</sup> Giannoulis, Elena, 2010, 182.

<sup>55</sup> Idem.

<sup>56</sup> Vidyasagar, Aparna, 'What Is an Amoeba?' in: *Live Science*, Planet Earth, 02 April 2016; <http://www.livescience.com/54281-amoeba-definition.html>. Date accessed: 21 August 2019.

<sup>57</sup> Giannoulis, Elena, 2010, 167.

<sup>58</sup> For instance: 'Le chat (Viens, mon beau chat, sur mon cœur amoureux...)' (Baudelaire 2007 [1857] : 45) or 'Le chat (Dans ma cervelle se promène...)' (*ibid.*: 60).

<sup>59</sup> Enoki, Masaki and Hitomi Kanehara, 2008, 246.

<sup>60</sup> Idem.

<sup>61</sup> Spiers, Emily, *Pop-feminist narratives: the female subject under neoliberalism in North America, Britain, and Germany*, Oxford (UK): Oxford University Press, 2018, 51.

<sup>62</sup> Roussin, Philippe, 2017, 401.

<sup>63</sup> Thorne, Matt, 'Autofiction, By Hitomi Kanehara, trans. David James Karashima', in: *Independent*, Culture, 29 February 2008; <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/autofiction-by-hitomi-kanehara-trans-david-james-karashima-789374.html>. Date accessed: 21 August 2019.

<sup>64</sup> Schmidt, Nina, 2018, 48.

<sup>65</sup> Roussin, Philippe, 2017, 401.